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Hospitals charge over Rs 700 for dengue fever test

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ISLAMABAD - Public sector hospitals in Karachi and other cities are charging from a patient Rs 700 to Rs 800 for dengue fever blood test in spite of government's claim that free testing facilities have been provided all over Pakistan.

It seems that no precautionary measures or preparations have been made to face the possible outbreak of this deadly disease in the cities like Lahore, where no dengue case has yet been reported. Dengue hemorrhagic fever is the direct outcome of combined negligence of public health institutions and municipal bodies as well as local governments, says a report.

The Network for Consumer Protection issued a report "Dengue Outbreak: A Logical Outcome of Sanitation System Failure" on 3rd of November. The report says "the dengue fever came in Karachi in October this year, where according to official statistics, the number of people with dengue infection crossed 500 by the end of the same month. However, press reports put this number much higher."

According to the report, the excessive and irrational use of antibiotics and antiviral medicines in Pakistan have made the viruses and bacteria more resistant against medicines and diseases like dengue have turned into epidemics.

Report says, there are four types of dengue viruses those cause

dengue fever. The most fatal and severe one of them is the dengue hemorrhagic fever. In fact dengue hemorrhagic fever is a complication of common dengue fever. The symptoms of all the four types of dengue fevers appear to be the same at the initial stage of dengue illness, which can be cured with proper medication within the first two weeks of the illness.

Dengue is diagnosed by two types of blood tests to find out the presence of dengue virus in the blood. However, commonly dengue is suspected when one has sudden onset of high fever, 103-105 degrees F, accompanied with severe headache, pain behind the eyes, body aches and pains, rashes on skin and nausea or vomiting. The fever lasts for 5-7 days.

More than 95 per cent dengue fever patients recover within two weeks of infection. Occasionally dengue fever can cause complication, the dengue hemorrhagic fever that leads to bleeding from gums, nose, bowel and into internal organs that is very severe and even fatal due to deficiency of platelets in the blood.

Platelets are small blood-borne cells whose primary role is to plug damaged blood vessels by forming blood clots, thereby preventing bleeding. Dengue is non-transmittable by any other mean except infected mosquito. Human to human contact is absolutely safe.

Dengue carrying mosquitoes breed over clean water pots and plant vases in backyards.